

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, July 24. 1711.

I Cannot refrain taking notice of a very remarkable piece of News, which I saw in the Foreign Papers last Post, and which contains a remarkable piece of Royal Gratitude in a Prince to his Subject, mix'd with the utmost Ingratitude of a Subject to a Prince, and both in one Addition; the Story is this, They write from Madrid, That King Philip of Spain, to recompense the Town of Bribeuga in Castile, for the Damage the Inhabitants sustain'd by the Attacks made thereon, when the English and Dutch Troops were Surrounded there, and made Prisoners, has granted them an Exemption from Taxes for four Years, and besides

this, has given them the Privilege of 3 Fairs to be held every Year, and the Tolls and Gabels of the same to the Town; so for this is very well, and a grateful Royal Bounty it is, to a Town that suffer'd in the common Calamity of War, and was in a great part destroy'd, to force their Enemy to Surrender, as they did at Discretion—But now mark the other Part; To complete the Gratification to the Town of Bribeuga, besides the Freedom of Taxes, the Fair, and the Tolls, &c. His Majesty grants them a Weekly Market, to be kept every Week on the SUNDAY; Horrible Bounty! Because the Town was almost destroyed

slay'd by the Enemy, they have Orders given them, to provoke God their Maker to destroy them all — The People are Subjects to Philip V. but Philip V. is a Subject to the God of Heaven, whose Peculiar it is to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords — Therefore it was that I said, and as it is a great and Royal Instance of Royal Gratitude from a Prince to his Subject, to I say, it is mix'd with the utmost Ingratitude of a Subject King to the Prince of all Princes, the King and God of Heaven and Earth, that in the very Teeth of his Goodness, and by Way of Acknowledgment of a Victory given him over his Enemies, he should set up the Prophanation of his Day, by Legal Authority, and order his People to buy and sell on that very Day wherein the Lord of the Sabbath hath said, *Thou shalt do no manner of Work, thou nor thy Ox nor Ass* — &c. That is, Thou King, nor thy Subjects or Servants, or their Oxen, &c.

This Assuming a Right, which Princes now-a-days make very light of, to Countermand the great Laws of their Maker, have nothing that I can see in them, but a Mark of meer Insolence and Rebellion against Heaven, and Claiming a Legislative Power, with a non obstante to the Laws of God — I do confess, this is not so much a Satyr upon the *Papish* Government of Spain, where we do not know but the Wicked Practice may have been of a long continuance, not that Prescription in Wickedness is a Plea against Heaven, but an Aggravation.

But certainly those Nations, who first have testified to the contrary Practice, who have recogniz'd the Duty first, and then committed the Crime, are Guilty of a double Crime, because they first break the Command, and then profess to do it after they know it to be a Crime; this has something particular in the Manner of Committing it, and of this part, perhaps the *Spaniards* may not be Guilty.

This is the black Charge laid against the *English* Book of Sports — A Thing that deserves, rather like *Job's* Curse upon the Day of his Birth to be entirely forgotten,

than remembred, were it not that it has been the true SOURCE of that Deluge of ——— and Licentiousness which is broken out upon the Nation — And there, by the Way, the Representation, as it is call'd, of the Convocation, might have found it, if they had thought it for their purpose to have search'd back so far; but it better answer'd their End, to place it upon the Rebellion, tho' it was 40 Year after; because, as the New Philosophers say, for their Modern System, they could the better solve other Phenomena, (*viz.* Blackning the Puritans) than they could by the former.

But to bury in silence Things too dirty to dabble in, I, that am reckning up to you about six and Twenty publick Enormities this Nation openly allow themselves in, and have already gone over two or three of them, cannot but remind you of a certain Act of Parliament, which touching upon a Thing forbidden expressly by the Command of God — Allows it again with this Addition, *Any Thing in any former Law to the contrary, in any wise notwithstanding* — Had it been said, indeed, any Thing in the Laws of God or Man to the contrary notwithstanding, it had been very gross; but let any Lawyer tell me, whether, if I put that Confirmation or Explication upon it, I should do any wrong?

I cannot better lead you to the Thing I mean, and which perhaps it is not so very safe for an Author, that every Body lies in wait for, and whose halting, both Friends and Enemies watch for, than by quoting an unlucky Pamphlet Printed long since, and for which the Author obtain'd many a hearty Curse; the Book is Entitled, *Reformation of Manners*; wherein are these Lines.

(Street
And Hackney Coachmen durst not plye the
In Sermon Time, till they had paid the State.

This refers, as I may be allow'd to suppose, to a certain Act of Parliament in the Reign of the late King William, and which I count the worst Blemish of that Reign, for Licencing Hackney Coaches, in which a certain

certain Number of them had leave, *non-
obstante*—as above, to ply on Sundays.

I remember to have heard, how the late
Queen Mary greatly dislike'd that Act, and
with'd the Necessities which were Pleaded
in excuse for it, were better explain'd, and
the Abuses of it prevented or guarded a-
gainst.

But it pass'd, any Thing in the Laws of
God or Man to the contrary in any wise
notwithstanding — What is done now,
wherein all the Coaches that please may
Work on the Sabbath Day, as I doubt not
her Majesty's Zeal for the Honour of God's
Institution, will cause her to Interpose the
Royal Authority, in case of the Abuse of it
— So I shall freely bear my little Testi-
mony against it, in Time and Place conve-

nient; mean Time, these Things in a Na-
tion pretending to Reformation, that Fast
and Pray, and cry to Heaven for Peace; I
say, as *Jehu* said to *foram* the Son of *Abab*
— *What Peace, so long as the Whoredoms,
of your Mother Jezebel and her Witchcrafts
are so many?*

What Peace could we expect on Earth,
while thus you made War with Heaven?
And what Success in War, while we rais'd
Taxes upon God's Property, and granted
Licenses to Sin, for Money to carry on the
War?

I conclude this, with the Quotation a-
foresaid at large.

*Thus Ostia boasts of her Regeneration,
And tells us wond'rous Tales of Reformation;
How against Vice she has been so severe,
That none but Men of Quality may Swear.
How publick Lewdness is expell'd the Nation,
That private Whoring may be more in Fashion:
The Parish Magistrates, like Pious Elves,
Let none be drunk on Sundays but themselves:
And Hackney Coachmen durst not ply the Street
In Sermon Time, 'till they had paid the State:
These, Ostia, are thy shams of Reformation,
With which thou mock'st thy Maker and the Nation
While in thy Streets unpunish'd here remain,
Crimes which have yet Insulted Heaven in vain;
Crimes which our Satyr blushes to Review,
And Sins thy Sister Sodom never knew.
The Jews are Fools, Jerusalem's out-done,
We Crucifice the Father, they the Son;
They kill'd a Man, for they suppos'd him so,
We boldly Sacrifice the God we know:
Superiour Lewdness Crowns thy Magistrates,
And Vice grown grey Usurps the Reverend Seats;
Eternal Blasphemies and Oaths abound,
And Bribes amongst thy Senators are found.*

*For shame, your Reformation Clubs give no
And jest with Men and jest with Heaven no more;
But if you would avenging Powers appease,
Avert the Indignation of the Skies,
Impending Ruin avoid, and calm the Fates,
Ye Hypocrites, reform your Magistrates
Reform of Manners A 101.*

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